

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CAB-09 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-11 FAA-00 SCI-06

ACDA-19 AEC-11 CU-04 NIC-01 DRC-01 /151 W

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R 040758Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2326

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJ: DIET SESSION ENDS

SUMMARY: 72ND DIET ENDED ITS FREQUENTLY STALLED AND OFTEN STORMY EXTENDED SESSION MONDAY JUNE 3 AFTER ENACTING INTO LAW 79 OF 95 BILLS SUBMITTED TO IT. AMONG MAJOR EVENTS OF LENGTHY 185-DAY SESSION WERE UNPRECEDENTED LOWER HOUSE HEARINGS ON ALLEGED PROFITEERING AND OTHER QTE ANTI-SOCIAL UNQTE BUSINESS PRACTICES ON PART OF BIG BUSINESS, APPROVAL OF JAPAN-PRC CIVAIR PACT, AND ENACTMENT OF BILLS TO CONTROL LAND USE AND LAND PRICES AND TO EFFECT CHANGES IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT. SESSION WAS MARKED BY PALPABLE GRANDSTANDING ON PART OF BOTH LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES SEEKING TO ENHANCE THEIR VOTER APPEAL IN UPCOMING UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. 72ND ORDINARY DIET SESSION, WHICH LASTED 185 DAYS AFTER BEING EXTENDED LAST APRIL FOR 35 DAYS, CONCLUDED ITS LENGTHY AND FREQUENTLY STORMY LIFE JUNE 3 AS BOTH HOUSES CONVENED LATE EVENING PLENARIES TO CLEAN UP LAST-MINUTE BUSINESS INCLUDING
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FINAL PASSAGE OF SEVERAL KEY BILLS. LOWER HOUSE, WHICH HAD BEEN STALLED SINCE MAY 25 BY OPPOSITION PARTY BOYCOTT PROTESTING

LDP EFFORTS TO PUSH THROUGH YASUKUNI SHIINE BILL, BEGAN TO FUNCTION ON LAST DAY AFTER LDP FINALLY BOWED TO STIFF OPPOSITION RESISTANCE AND GAVE UP ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE FOR TIME BEING. ON MONDAY, LOWER CHAMBER PASSED AND REFERRED TO UPPER HOUSE TWO BILLS TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE 10 PERCENT PAY RAISE TO GOVERNMENT WORKERS AND TO IMPROVE PENSION BENEFITS TO FORMER PUBLIC OFFICIALS.

2. IN UPPER HOUSE, CONTROVERSY OVER LEGISLATION RELATED TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS AND OTHER SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURES RESULTED IN ABORTING OF SIX BILLS, BUT LATE EVENING PLENARY APPROVED FINAL BATCH OF PENDING LEGISLATION WHICH INCLUDED MAJOR BILLS CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOVERNMENT AGENCY TO ADMINISTER LAND UTILIZATION LAW, PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR SETTLEMENT OF POLLUTION DISPUTES AND ELECTRIC POWER DEVELOPMENT. ELECTRIC POWER BILL WAS DESIGNED TO FACILITATE EXPANSION OF POWER GENERATING FACILITIES INCLUDING NUCLEAR FACILITIES AND SEEKS TO FACILITATE SITING OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS BY PROVIDING TAX REDUCTION AND OTHER COMPENSATION TO LOCAL RESIDENTS.

3. HAVING PASSED 79 OF 95 BILLS SUBMITTED TO IT, DIET ENDED WITH CREDITABLE SCORE OF 83 PERCENT. OBVIOUS CONCERN INFLUENCING DIET TACTICS ON PART OF BOTH RULING LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES WAS TO USE DIET FORUM AS PART OF ALREADY DEVELOPING CAMPAIGN FOR JULY 7 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. WITH SKYROCKETING PRICES AND INFLATION AS KEY ISSUE, UNPRECEDENTED SUMMONING OF 20 LEADING BUSINESS EXECUTIVES FOR PUBLIC GRILLING IN DIET ON PRICE HIKING, HOARDING AND OTHER QTE ANTI-SOCIAL UNQTE BUSINESS PRACTICES WAS USED BY OPPOSITION TO TRY TO DIS-CREDIT LDP AS WELL AS BIG BUSINESS AND EXPOSE THEM AS ENEMIES OF CONSUMER CITIZENS. ON OTHER HAND, LDP HANDLING OF YASUKUNI SHRINE BILL AND EDUCATION BILLS ALSO REPRESENTED EFFORT ON ITS PART TO CREATE COUNTER-ISSUES THAT WOULD APPEAL TO CONSERVATIVE-MINDED VOTERS. SCENARIO FOR ABORTED SHRINE BILL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO SHOW LDP EXERTING MAXIMUM EFFORT TO ENACT BILL ONLY TO BE FRUSTRATED BY OPPOSITOON PARTIES, WHILE BILLS TO STRENGTHEN POSITION AND AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPALS AND TO ENHANCE PAY OF TEACHERS SERVED TO PUT LDP IN ROLE OF CHAMPION OF SOUND EDUCATION AGAINST RESISTANCE OF LEFTIST-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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LED TEACHERS UNION.

4. COMMENTARY IN LOCAL PRESS TENDED TO GIVE FAIRLY GOOD MARKS TO ACHIEVEMENTS OF SESSION, WHICH HELD IN MIDST OF ECONOMIC SHOCK CREATED BY OIL CRISIS AND WHICH, DESPITE DELAYS, GOT MOST OF ITS WORK DONE. MANY MEDIA APPRAISALS NOTED WITH APPROVAL THAT MOST MAJOR BILLS WERE PASSED AFTER CERTAIN DEGREE OF CONSENSUS HAD BEEN REACHED THROUGH CONSULTATION AND COMPROMISE BETWEEN RULING LDP AND OPPOSITON PARTIES. COMMENTARY ALSO STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT DIET HAD FAILED TO DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH

PRICE PROBLEM.

5. WITH DIET SESSION NOW CONCLUDED, MAIN FOCUS OF DOMESTIC
POLITICS HAS SHIFTED TO UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, WHICH
WILL BEGIN OFFICIALLY JUNE 14 BUT IS IN FACT ALREADY WELL
ADVANCED AND JUST ABOUT ENTERING HOMESTRETCH.
SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TOKYO07256
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740141-0347
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740675/aaaacmtk.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIET SESSION ENDS SUMMARY: 72ND DIET ENDED ITS FREQUENTLY STALLED AND OFTEN
TAGS: PINT, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005